

## ACS and MST Hold Autumn Meeting

### A Review of the Events of September 11th.

By Peter Smith, N7BYP

On Saturday, November 3, 2001, the Seattle Auxiliary Communications Service (ACS) and the Western Washington Medical Services Team (MST) met at the Seattle Public Utilities training facility. Approximately sixty people were present. Speakers from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, Seattle Fire Department, volunteer urban search and rescue teams, and an ACS member who was visiting New York and Washington, all described their experiences at "ground zero" following the September 11th terrorist attacks in New York and Washington D.C.

After each presentation, a panel of ACS and MST members discussed the implications for their organization's respective missions. Members of the audience also made comments at this time. Panel members included Bill Dockstader,

W7LSK; Judy Dotson, KD7EUH, Steve Marten, special consultant to the Seattle EOC; Mark Sheppard, N7LYE, and Marina Zuetell, N7LSL. The meeting was convened by Peter Smith, N7BYP who introduced the speakers and panel.

The first speaker was Randy Hansen, a Captain in the Seattle Fire Department who currently works in the Operations Division and serves as a Plans Section Chief for the Urban Search and Rescue

Team and Metropolitan Medical Strike Team. Captain Hansen gave an account of the search and rescue operations at the World Trade Center from the perspective of the Department of Justice Support Team. He illustrated his presentation with photographic slides that showed the great destruction and wreckage at ground zero. After he finished, the panel and audience discussed implications. (*Ed. Note:* Please see *Changing Times, Changing Mission* in this issue).

The next speaker was David Hogemeyer, an official with FEMA Telecommunications. Mr. Hogemeyer explained how telecommunications were established and maintained. He discussed the many factors that both helped and interfered with communications. Some of these were physical, for example tall Manhattan building



*Photo by Mark Sheppard, N7LYE*

David Holdsworth, KJ7PW, describes his experiences

## QRV?

QRV? = "Are you prepared?"

*QRV? is the Newsletter of the Seattle  
Auxiliary Communication Service*

City of Seattle  
Emergency Management

**ACS Net & Disaster Coordination**  
Weekly Net, Mondays at 7:00 p.m.  
146.96 MHz

**ACS Primary Message Channels**  
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**ACS Website**  
[www.cityofseattle.org/eoc/acs](http://www.cityofseattle.org/eoc/acs)

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King County ARES  
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## From the Editor

### Safe At Home

The magnitude of the events of September 11th are still hard to grasp. Months later it continues to effect us all, whether it's longer lines and delays at airports or just that uneasy feeling of waiting for something else to happen.

At our November meeting we heard first-hand accounts of the heroic search and rescue efforts at ground zero. We also heard about disruptions in travel and the very real feelings of fear and uncertainty that many experienced at that time. We also talked about our mission and how these events affect the way we fulfill that mission.

My recollection is that one of the very first ideas that came out the discussion was that we must take steps to assure the safety of our families. It's fitting this was mentioned first, it's that important! Can any of us imagine being effective as emergency communicators if we were seriously concerned about the welfare of our loved ones?

Have each of us taken steps to assure our family's safety if we are called to service in time of natural or man-caused disaster? I know we've gone over this before, but because it's so very important, let's do it again.

1. How will you communicate with your family? What if you are at work? Away from home? Do you have a plan so you and your family can check in with a third party (assuming the phones are operational)? Is there a possibility for you to establish radio communications, either via ham or family service radio? Have you decided where you will meet if you cannot communicate via phone or radio?
2. Do you have at least a three day supply of food and water either at home or in your car? Have you checked it recently? Does this include necessary medications?
3. Have you thought about alternative shelter? Where will you go if you cannot use your home?

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## From the EOC

By Jim Mullen, Director  
Seattle Emergency Management

As you read this in December, if anything, a lot more has happened since I wrote this (in late November). It has been a turbulent and trying time for all of us. The earthquake of February 28 has been eclipsed by the events of September 11. In between and around those events has been a steady stream of meetings re the World Series (a cup which passed), and other conference security planning. We have been deluged with request from private citizens, elected and appointed officials, and city employees from line departments about physical security, City preparedness, etc.

The President of the United States has called for "voluntary civil defense" involvement from citizens, and I was recently asked if we had ever contemplated the use of volunteers. I am happy to reply, that we have quite a few gifted volunteers in ACS. They are active. In fact, they are depended upon by not only City Emergency Management, but also by their fellow volunteers (over 6,000!) in the SDART Program.

As I write this, it is clear that it will be time very soon to brief an incoming Mayor on the issues that are important related to Emergency Management. At the same time, we are planning to devote some interim resources that should enhance your work. Whatever happens in transition from one Executive the next, you can be sure that the ACS's contributions will be described glowingly. You will be depicted as one of the best trained, most unselfish entities a City could be associated with. It is often said here that there is nothing that ACS members will not do in a crisis.

Your primary mission will remain the same: please continue to be the best trained and most dedicated group of volunteers in the country. I will try to keep the resources flowing in an extremely tight budget year, because we need not only to say we support you, we have to do

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## Changing Times, Changing Mission?

By Peter Smith, N7BYP

How has the mission of ACS changed as a result of terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon? This was the question on everyone's mind during the ACS/MST Autumn meeting. The agenda presented a unique opportunity to hear first-hand accounts of communications issues from several people who worked with search rescue operations or who were in the area and able to report individual reactions and responses of the general public.

During the panel and audience discussion of the presentations the following points were raised.

### Preparedness:

1. The family preparedness of emergency radio responder continues to be essential.
2. There is a need for preparedness for both natural and human-caused disasters.
3. In one sense you cannot prepare specifically for every possibility. Events of September 11th were overwhelming.
4. Given the point above, what are realistic, reasonable steps that can be taken to prepare for all possible disasters?
5. Emergency radio volunteers must resolve to carry radio transceivers with them at all times

### Organization

1. In addition to the organization provided by the ARRL, there is need for further national level organization for emergency ham communications.
2. Some agency should establish a mutual aid system for hams statewide. The system should ensure consistency in operations across the state.
3. The organization and coordination of emergency response should be clarified when several agencies respond.

For example, when several agencies respond to a disaster, to whom should volunteer emergency radio operators report?

4. Because many will volunteer for emergency communication duty immediately after a disaster ACS/MST should develop plans to organize and manage those first-time volunteers.

### Communication

1. There should be systems in place (e.g. internet discussion forums, web-based enrollment/registration programs) to enable hams to contact one another both to prepare for, and respond to, disasters
2. Every ham publication should give regular, specific information on how to join emergency communication teams and general instructions regarding how to contribute in positive ways to communications during emergencies.
3. The ARRL should continue and expand its coverage of emergency radio and communications.
4. Repeater ownership, frequencies, power, and other relevant information about the repeater should be posted at the repeater site.

### Mission/Planning/Training

1. There is a need for an overall plan for the management of emergency radio preparedness: what should be done 1st, 2nd, 3rd, etc
2. We should continue developing the organization and refining the missions of ACS/MST
3. The variety of situations to which we will be called to respond requires a comprehensive training program. This training must cover not only specific procedures but also prepare communicators to be successful in dealing with the many new communications issues that undoubtedly will arise.

### EOC

1. The events of September 11th illustrate how the EOC activates for national events in order to protect its local area

2. Local hams did not overload area repeaters on September 11th.
3. A training manual and procedures for EOC operations is essential. For example, EOC responders should know that when reporting to the EOC for duty, they should first check in with EOC staff leadership.

### General Considerations

1. During the present time when motivational levels are high because of the events of September 11th, we should work hard toward improving our systems
2. It is important to recruit new members.
3. Thought should be given to the possibilities of reinstitution of programs such as civil defense.
4. Emergency radio teams should be established for specific agencies such as fire, police, public utilities, etc.

Have the events of September 11th changed the mission of ACS? The short answer is no. Our mission was, and continues to be that of providing auxiliary communication and communication support services to our city.

Will the events of September 11th influence the way we carry out our mission? The short answer is yes. We will very likely make adjustments to training, organizational, and procedural aspects of our organization.

What changes will be made? These have not yet been determined. As your ACS leadership reviews the points listed above and also considers other factors related to both natural and human-caused disasters we will continue to develop and refine the tools and processes we use in carrying out our mission.

This is where your help is needed. Please do communicate your ideas to ACS leadership. It's as easy as an email or a phone call. We will consult you as we consider and implement changes. Stay tuned for further developments.

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Watch for Personal Profile to resume with the Winter issue of QRP?

## Meeting, from page 1

heights and locations. Others were organizational and included frequency allocations and repeater identification. At the completion of Mr. Hogemeyers presentation the panel and audience again discussed implications.

Greg Varney, a volunteer in urban search and rescue, recounted how his unit assisted with search and rescue operations at ground zero. Greg's unit employed search dogs to help locate victims. He described the difficult conditions his team encountered at ground zero and illustrated his presentations with slides. As with the other presentations, the panel discussed how this information relates to our organization's missions.

David Holdsworth, KJ7PW, and his XYL were visiting relatives in the New York area when the terrorists struck. On the morning of September 11th they were on a train bound for Washington D.C. David recounted the unusual and somewhat chaotic situation as he arrived in Washington D.C, giving a first-hand account of the ways that both he and the general public responded to the disaster.

Ned Worcester, KB7NFO, Emergency Management Systems Analyst for the Seattle Public Utilities described his experiences at the New York Red Cross Communications Headquarters. He gave an account of his work as the Disaster Computer Operations officer, managing computers, data networks, and communications systems.

At the conclusion of the meeting everyone joined the panel in discussing additional implications for ACS and MST missions and plans that related to the tragic events of September 11th. ■■■■■

## Editor, from page 2

Actually, although I have considered and/or made arrangements for the items above I'm not at all certain those arrangements are adequate. I resolve to review what I've done to assure my family's safety. While this has always been essential, recent events have raised it to a higher level. We must always remember that we won't be able to fulfill our emergency communications mission if our loved ones aren't *safe at home*. ■■■■■

## EOC, from page 2

it. So, my challenge will be to find ways to make your "jobs" easier and more fulfilling.

As the year winds down, please extend to your families my gratitude, and that of all of us here at Emergency Management, for their willingness to share you with us when our City has needed your support. I am not unmindful of home projects going unattended, or weekend time being interrupted because the City calls, or because your conscientiousness regarding training supercedes other obligations, however temporarily. As we reflect on all of the blessings we have as a nation, let's remember what our families allow us to do for others.

"Thank you" seems inadequate, but thank you just the same. We will get through this period. Have very happy, and hopefully peaceful holidays. ■■■■■

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*Care to contribute to QRV? Your editor is always looking for articles and/or ideas for our newsletter. [n7byp@arrl.net](mailto:n7byp@arrl.net)*

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